

Miscalculation

Politicians/diplomats believe (?) at least nothing is irrevocable, irreversible (except the initiation of large-scale war): hence, practically anything is permissible for short-term political gains. They take gambles--the odds of which are better than the public realises--some of which proved they really to have overestimated.

In particular, inaction, or the postponing of action, is believed rarely to have irreversible consequences (you can always act a little later and try a little harder, pay a little more, and recapture lost ground); this reduces the number of perceived crises:

A crisis is when the consequences of short-term inaction/postponement may be serious or irreversible. (i.e., when ensuing developments may be much worse, or irretrievably worse, than the evolution following some action--either currently conceived or to-be-found--undertaken immediately)

If a given action were clearly better than inaction (and believed better than any others likely to be found), then no crisis. Otherwise, urgent search: either for information clarifying the short-term choice or for new actions.

Urgency is greater if the loss/pain is not merely to be determined by the immediate decision but ~~ix~~ may be experienced/suffered in the short-run. (Time-discount doesn't operate, anticipated pain looms larger; responsibility will be more clearly linked to present decision or inaction; specifically, present decision-makers will still be around, to be held responsible and punished; short-term losses look more inescapable--long-term problems can't look quite as irretrievable, no matter what current theories imply, since an answer may always be found, present theories may be wrong, or some counterbalancing development whose nature not now imagined may occur).

Urgency also increased the more that the loss will be clearly attributable to this ~~xxx~~ choice of inaction or action, and these particular decision-makers (e.g., the more immediate the loss will be; but also, the more the public is aware that a decision, involving conscious consideration of alternatives, estimates, values, is being/has been made.

~~XXX JUST AS "IGNORANCE IS AN EXCUSE," INATTENTION IS AN EXCUSE.~~

Leader can be criticised, "held responsible for" inattention (i.e., attention to something else), but it is not regarded as reasonable inference to read as much meaning into inaction accompanied by inattention. ~~Decision-maker~~ It cannot be inferred that the decision-maker "preferred" the inaction to "rejected" alternatives--hence, that his expectations or values must be such-and-such--when it appears that he was not considering alternatives (his mind was elsewhere). He can be punished for laziness, irresponsibility, inattentiveness: but not for wrong estimates or bad values (except to the extent that these led him to be inattentive--at the earlier moment when he began to be inattentive).

In all cases here, "inaction" is to be read as "inaction or continuance of current action, current program of actions, etc." Inaction = lack of output, or, lack of change in output (e.g., suppose output is a) repetitive or patterned, regardless of input/stimulus, or b) programmed as a response to input, without inputting to or requiring output from Controller.

Some instruments of power:

diplomacy

threat and use of military force: within country and outside

military assistance advisory groups

combat support

military assistance and training

assistance in economic programming

technical assistance

provision of capital